

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The following listing of claims supersedes all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of managing service requests from ~~a first module acting as a client module~~ to a plurality of ~~other modules acting as server modules~~, the method comprising:

repeatedly receiving, at at least one separate [[an]] information-collating monitor module, from each of the other plural server modules, an indication of the current operational status of each of the [[other]] server modules, said operational status comprising [[the]] current loading information associated with the server modules;

receiving, at a control intermediary the first associated with a client module, from the information-collating at least one said information-collating monitor module, an indication of the current operational status of each of the [[other]] server modules;

selecting, by the control intermediary, of one of the [[other]] server modules for directing a service request to from the therewith-associated client module based on the received indications of operational status of the [[other]] server modules; and

the control intermediary repeating the step of selecting one of the [[other]] server modules for directing a service request to from the therewith-associated client module, so

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as to identify an alternative [[other]] server module based on the received loading information, in the event that the transmission of the service request to the earlier selected server module fails.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, in which the [[first]] client module comprises a client application and the control intermediary, the method further comprising:

receiving at the control intermediary a request for a Web service description from the client application, and selecting one of the [[other]] server modules to direct the request to based on the indications of current operational status of the [[other]] server modules;

the control intermediary receiving the requested Web service description and substituting an identifier of the control intermediary into the description before passing the description to the client application.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A method of managing service requests from a ~~first module acting as~~ a client module to a plurality of ~~other modules acting as~~ server modules, the ~~[[first]]~~ client module comprising a client application and a control intermediary, the method comprising:

repeatedly receiving, at ~~[[an]]~~ a separate information-collating monitor module, from each of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules, an indication of the current operational status of each of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules, said operational status comprising ~~[[the]]~~ loading information associated with the server modules;

receiving, at the control intermediary, from the information-collating monitor module, an indication of the operational status of each of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules;

receiving, at the control intermediary, a request for a Web service description from the client application, and selecting one of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules to direct the request to based on the indications of operational status of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules;

the control intermediary receiving the requested Web service description and substituting an identifier of the control intermediary into the description before passing the description to the client application; and

the control intermediary repeating the step of selecting one of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules for directing a service request to, so as to identify an alternative ~~[[other]]~~ server

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module based on ~~[[the]]~~ loading information, in the event that the transmission of the service request to the earlier selected server module fails.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4, further comprising:  
the control intermediary receiving a service request from the client application,  
and selecting one of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules to direct the request to based on ~~the~~  
~~indications of the~~ operational status of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules.

6-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, in which the control intermediary periodically polls the information-collating monitor module to obtain ~~the~~  
~~indications of the~~ operational status of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules.

9. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:  
a ~~first module acting as a~~ client module and a plurality of ~~[[other]]~~ server modules  
~~acting as server modules~~, in which the client module is ~~arranged~~ configured to send  
service requests to the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules,

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~~the system further comprising:~~

[[an]] at least one information-collating monitor module ~~arranged~~ configured to repeatedly receive, from each of the [[other]] server modules, an indication of [[the]] current operational status of the [[other]] server modules, said operational status comprising [[the]] loading information associated with the server modules;

the client module comprising a control intermediary ~~arranged~~ configured to receive from the information-collating monitor module an indication of [[the]] operational status of each of the [[other]] server modules, and ~~further arranged~~ to select one of the [[other]] server modules for directing a service request to based on the ~~indications of~~ operational status of the [[other]] server modules; and

the control intermediary repeating the step of selecting one of the [[other]] server modules for directing a service request to, so as to identify an alternative [[other]] server module based on [[the]] loading information, in the event that the transmission of the service request to the earlier selected server module fails.

10. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, the [[first]] client module further comprising:

a client application,

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the control intermediary being ~~arranged~~ configured to receive a request for a Web service description from the client application, and ~~arranged~~ to select one of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules to direct the request to based on ~~the indications of~~ operational status of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules;

the control intermediary being ~~arranged~~ configured to receive the requested Web service description and substitute an identifier of the control intermediary into the description before passing the description to the client application.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

~~a first module acting as a~~ client module and a plurality of ~~[[other]]~~ server modules ~~acting as server modules,~~

the ~~[[first]]~~ client module comprising a client application and a control intermediary, in which the client module is ~~arranged~~ configured to send service requests to the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules,

~~the system further comprising:~~

[[an]] at least one information-collating monitor module ~~arranged~~ configured to repeatedly receive from each of the [[other]] server modules an indication of [[the]] operational status of the [[other]] server modules, said operational status comprising [[the]] loading information associated with the server modules;

the control intermediary being ~~arranged~~ configured to receive from the information-collating monitor module an indication of [[the]] operational status of each of the [[other]] server modules;

the control intermediary being further ~~arranged~~ configured to receive a request for a Web service description from the client application, and to select one of the [[other]] server modules for directing a service request to based on ~~the indications of~~ operational status of the [[other]] server modules;

the control intermediary being ~~arranged~~ configured to receive the requested Web service description and substitute an identifier of the control intermediary into the description before passing the description to the client application; and

wherein the control intermediary is further ~~arranged~~ configured to repeat the step of selecting one of the [[other]] server modules for directing a service request to, so as to identify an alternative [[other]] server module, in the event that the transmission of the service request to the earlier selected server module fails.

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13. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 12, the control intermediary being further ~~arranged~~ configured to receive a service request from the client application, and to select one of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules to direct the request to based on ~~the indications of the~~ operational status of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules.

14-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, in which the control intermediary is further ~~arranged~~ configured to periodically poll ~~[[the]]~~ an information-collating monitor module to obtain ~~[[the]]~~ indications of ~~[[the]]~~ operational status of the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules.

17. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, in which the ~~[[other]]~~ server modules are Web service servers.



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18. (Previously Presented) A storage medium carrying computer readable code representing instructions for causing processors to perform the method according to claim 1 when the instructions are executed by the processors.

19-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium carrying computer readable code representing instructions for causing processors to operate as the system according to claim 9 when the instructions are executed by the processors.

22. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium containing computer program instructions for causing processors to operate as the system according to claim 12 when the instructions are executed by the processors.

23. (Cancelled)